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ABSTRACT

Cognitive and operational difficulties that may ensue from the modification of teacher role into teacher/advisor role can be alleviated by the adoption of four sequential processes. Teachers and administrators involved in role change must pass through the stages of: (1) modifying the old role to include the new; (2) identifying with the new role in lieu of the old; (3) overemphasizing the new role; and (4) comfortably integrating the new role into the total constellation of roles. This conceptual process scheme will allow school personnel to successfully make role transitions with a minimum of identity confusion. (LH)

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ROLE CHANGE
(From Teacher to Teacher/Advisor)

By
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Administrators are concerned and giving considerable attention to the teacher/advisory system yet it is an area for which few models and/or schemes are available so that effective interventions in the change process can be more adequately planned. Hopefully the following conceptual scheme not only for viewing the role change from teacher to teacher/advisor but also for using this scheme to describe a readjustment to "do" a new role will help administrators in planning change efforts. A conceptual scheme will be presented in broad outline and some of the factors involved in moving toward the new role will be discussed. This scheme is based on the assumption that role change should be treated as a process rather than as a static phenomenon. Such an approach allows for an emphasis on the analysis of the social psychological processes experienced by teacher advisors in high schools during role change. This suggests a consideration of the sequences of experiences of teachers during the process of role change, that is, the process experienced by teachers in becoming more acclimated toward helping interpersonally as a true friend via the teacher/advisor role in the high school.

The role change occurs in the following four interrelated and sometimes overlapping processes: 1. modifying the previous role 2. identifying with the new role 3. overemphasizing the new role and 4. intergrating the new role into one's total constellation of roles.

The teacher/advisor role is relatively new. There has been little opportunity for the development of clear definitions of this new role because of factors such as: a short historical past, few people coming into direct contact with Teacher/Advisors, and a lack of understanding by the high school in general. As a result some high school teachers are feeling forced into relatively high risk change programs with no model to help with awareness of stages of development. This is a disadvantage in that the role of the high school teacher today is still rigidly seen by many as teacher of subject matter only. Although it may be relatively easy to change one's self, it takes time to allow others to accept the integration of the new role into the program. Moreover there are other ways out for the teacher. Indeed, some teachers deny any real differences of the new role. The teacher/advisor role is a relatively unstable condition and requires continual renewal interventions utilizing behavioral science research findings. The new teacher/advisor role is not conducive to quick measurable results, but if effectively applied it is apt to ellicit immediate, frequent, and easily observable responses from others.

Some teacher concerns about the new role are: how to relate more helpfully to others inter- and intra- personally, the need for training and the potentiality for contaminating one's identity as well as interfering in the performance of the regular teaching of subject role. With regards to the third category, in the institution the new role must be supported against negative definition, and should not be a basis for stigma. If the new role is brought into play by the instiution, teachers can overcompensate and effect negative outcomes in other roles. School personnel involved may direct a disproportionate amount of attention to the new role to the detriment of the other roles. However, consultants can intervene in the role change process with designs for

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learning the social and interpersonal skills necessary to play the role with sufficient ease, preventing its contamination of one's identity and one's performance of other roles.

Teachers may be followed from the time of original orientation and resulting training input to the time that they assume new roles in the high school. Data can be collected by interviews, field observations, and workshops with people who have been involved in teacher/advisor systems. Several teachers can be chosen for group sessions which can provide assessments and topics for various training workshops.

Some teachers pass through a given step of role change in a manner of weeks where others take months and years. The teachers do tend to follow, however, a common sequence of modifying the old role, identifying the new, overemphasizing the new role and integrating their new role into their total constellation of roles.

Process of Role Change

Modifying the previous role. To become an end product of a new teacher/advisor role a teacher becomes commited to a conception of self that the new role requires or allows one to be and become. During the first few weeks the teachers are not aware of the permanent shift of role and many do not allow themselves to think in these terms. They do not see the need to consider leaving an image of self that is, and has been, workable for years and years. During the first part of the change effort heavy emphasis is ascribed to the old role and many want to know what two or three steps they could follow in order to be accepted in the new role. As teachers continue to pursue steps and methodology as well as conditions to come, consultants are continually on call to respond to questions and help them in their move into the new role at their own pace. They may have questions and concerns such as "what specifically should I do differently?" "I feel overwhelmed by the abundance of exercises, games and simulations to use in T/A groups but I need help in selecting them at the right time for appropriate learnings." "I am told that its the way I'm present with students that allows them to "be" and "become" and that is confusing." "I can see no real differences in functions to be performed." etc.

Consultants sometimes help in the confusion of the role expectations. Their responses to questions depends upon the situation including the people concerned and the place where the questions are asked. Some teachers are given minimal explanation of the new role and osme are worked with quite closely. The explanations of the new role are relatively frequent and comprehensive but some are selective in what they hear as being desirable for their new role. The one approach that makes the most significant and immediate change is the intervention of a workshop conducted at strategic intervals. Teachers are not alone in needing peer understanding and support while making significant real life decisions.

As the initial queries subside teachers enter a period of vascillation between acceptance and denial of the new role, accompanied by corresponginds moods of dispieasure and elation. During periods of acceptance they sometimes speak of their helplessness, the problems they will have with their peers and students, and their inability to master the skills of the new role. During periods of adjustment some state defiantly "I know that I can make the old system work. It has always worked in the past and I've been successful and been seen as being successful by administration, peers, students and parents. Why can't I continue to be effective in that manner?" Sometimes teachers shift back and forth between

these two definitions within one short meeting. However, as the time passes each definition and corresponding mood lasts increasingly for longer periods of time and the intensity of each is diminished.

To summarize, teachers go through the following sequence in modifying the old role: 1. agree to test out advantages of new role 2. a tentative shift into the new role followed by 3. a period of vascillation between the old and the new roles. This sequence raises several theoretical questions like, "Should the institution allow an abundance of time with no policy level backing for the shift?"

Identifying with the new role. When the daily schedule of classes is changed to include time for T/A groups their previous role is refocused for identifying with the new role. Identifying with the teacher/advisor role is the process by which the teacher embrases the role as a part of self. It is a transformation by which the teacher finds new answers to the questions, who am I and how can I become a real and true friend to my students in this situation with different ground rules for learning. The following analytic concepts are linked sequentially in analyzing this process: prior experience, labeling, affective attachment, and experiential conformation.

An individual entering a new role draws on what he considers relevant prior experience in defining his new role. When he assumes a label of the new role, that is, makes a cognitive attachment between self and role, the label provides a framework for binding a single category relevant prior experiences as well as present and anticipated future experiences. By merely accepting the label, it is possible for a teacher to go through the motions of the role requirements without making an affective attachment for full identification; however, the role must be embraced emotionally as part of self. Once either labeling or affective attachment or both occur, the teacher must receive experiential conformation of self-in-role in order to maintain the identify. Conformation may come from three sources: self, "social others" (students, administrators, parents, etc.) satisfactory experiences in practice.

Initial identification with the new role is tenuous and sometimes negative. As indicated in the previous discussion, the administration and consultants must explain several times before teachers cognitively accept the label of Teacher/Advisor. Upon the first acceptance they consider a multitude of definitions which may be drawn from the new role.

Positive identification appears to be enhanced by the following three types of events: 1. student and peer staff members behavior toward them in the new role, 2. Teacher/advisor progress in skill retraining, and 3. his realization that other roles have not been negated by entry into this new role.

Consultants, administrators, and peers from other schools where T/A is in practice emphasize that a professional independent T/A role is possible. They also accept and treat teacher/advisors as important persons and work at encouraging them to make positive self appraisals and discouraging self-defeating definitions. The fact that the teachers cannot move too far away from the norms within their own schools slows down the process of receiving experiential conformation. The sequence of role training is structured so that some tasks must be mastered before others can be attempted. Mastery of successive criteria provide "bench marks" for progress and can be a source of periodic encouragement. The need for teacher/advisor to receive social conformation from an admiring staff is absolutely necessary.

It is possible to make specific role demands on the teacher where you are at a position to reward or punish the teacher for compliance or non-compliance on such things as salary increases, etc. However, this may be out of keeping with the

regular nature of the new role and its values. In the new role situation, it is necessary that affective attachment to the new role becomes a part of the persons very being. To play a role in the face of unclear difinition or very little structure as to one, two, three strategy make it difficult to grasp. The institutional factor does not necessitate at this point that there be full identification with the new role of the Teacher/Advisor.

Overemphasizing the new role to master role skills

To become a full fledged encumbent of a role, a teacher must acquire the skills, and the ability, technological as well as social, which is necessary to meet the role requirements. During socialization the individual may overemphasize the role in order to master these skills. More attention, and often time, is given to the role than will be necessary when the role is mastered. Overemphasis in Teacher/Advisor socialization occurs at two different times: during the period of retraining when the teachers are involved in mastering role skills; and then back on the scene in the Teacher/Advisor group, where they are involved with mastering social role skills. Re-entering the social situation in the school, in his department, in the Teacher/Advisor group, and in regular teaching classes, is perhaps the most difficult hurdle to cross. In contrast the shelter and support during training sessions and discussions with consultants, are the settings where both real and process differences must be dealt with. It is here where the teacher can be exposed to honest situations with feedback for positive change. Until they learn to play their new role with ease and confidence, the new approach receives a disporportion of the amount of time, and attention.

If the teacher can define the project and self as worthy and if he has skill in managing other's definition of him then transition is easier. Consultants, administrators and other teachers are continually helping with this.

At first Teacher/Advisors are uncertain of their role with others in the school. New definitions of self can grow only through encounters with these others. However, social skill and managing the responses of others develop through actual encounters. At this time, while definition itself is uncertain and skill is at a minimum, the least traumatic for learning and practicing the new role is that of carefully choosing others and social settings. In a sense they become their own socializing agent first by charting their own course and later by practically working with others to define them as persons of new potentials or for being helpful in developing their Teacher/Advisor groups and total school.

There are at least three ways in which the role may receive more emphasis during the process of role change once it is mastered: 1. More time per day may be given to learning the roles. 2. More attention may be given to performance of the role. 3. A larger portion of the teacher's identity may be integrated in the role. The period of time that it may last will be from two to three years or more. As skills increase, however, the teacher gives less emphasis to the old role and begins to establish positive identity through the performance of all roles more effectively.

Integrating the new role into one's total constellations of roles

As teachers master Teacher/Advisor role skills, they are able to play the role with greater ease and with less attention to detail. This in turn allows them to give more attention to themselves in other roles and gradually begin to give responsibility for learning to students alone and in groups via goal integration.

if the process of role change is successful, teacher/advisors assume new roles effectively within relatively short times after leaving the initial training inputs. However, probably not everyone will obtain the level of being wholly identified with new roles.

Overview

The process of role change is to continuously learn to modify old roles and self concepts and to acquire new ones. This process of role change can be made to be a manageable problem by utilizing a scheme emphasizing role change as a process of becoming. A basic question to be continually pursured is what do teachers experience during the process of becoming an encumbent of the new role?

Four sequential processes were named and discussed: 1. modifying the old role, 2. identifying with the new role; 3. overemphasizing the new role, and 4. integrating the new role into one's total constellation of roles. With few exceptions role change not only has been played down but also has been seen as a static phenomenon. The aim has been to utilize a conceptual process scheme which hopefully will allow administrators and teachers to view the quality of teacher change through time so that appropriate interventions can be designed to get at real issues during the teacher/advisor role change effort.